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Canned shrimp is due to become relatively scarce in United States markets, not because of a shortage of shrimp but as a result of the diversion of a greater part of the catch into the fresh and frozen trade, the Office of the Coordinator of Fisheries reported today.

On the Gulf coast, center of the shrimp industry, the pack of canned shrimp declined approximately 25 percent in 1943 as compared with the previous year, although the catch increased by about 10 percent.

Representatives of the Coordinator's Office estimate the total 1943 pack of shrimp as 450,000 cases, as against 692,000 cases in 1942. As a result of a recent conference with industry leaders, they believe the trend away from canning shrimp is gaining such momentum that the 1944 pack may not exceed 200,000 to 250,000 cases.

Probably reasons for the change are the popularity of the fresh and frozen products, the shortage of cannery labor, and the high prices paid for fresh shrimp. A further advantage from the consumer's standpoint is the fact that while canned shrimp require ration points, fresh and frozen shrimp are unrationed.

Although the immediate reasons for the decline of shrimp canning are the result of war conditions, many shrimp dealers believe that frozen peeled shrimp will be the mainstay of the postwar industry, officials of the Coordinator's Office said.

Shrimp is by far the South's most important fishery product, both in poundage and value. Louisiana is the most important producer, taking about two-thirds of the total. Texas ranks second in the shrimp industry, followed by Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina in the order named.